

**Submitters:** Andrew West and Michael Everson

**Date:** May 4th, 2019

**CLDR Short Name:** TROLL

**CLDR Keywords:** troll, fairy tale, fantasy, monster

**Sort Location:** In the PERSON-FANTASY category, after ELF

**Reference Emoji:** FANTASY-GOBLIN

**Images:**



144 × 144

72 × 72

36 × 36

18 × 18

Image credit: Michael Everson.

Free for use in conjunction with this proposal.

## Abstract

This proposal requests the addition of a Troll emoji to the Unicode Emoji Standard. The troll is a mythical being that is widely known from Norse mythology, Scandinavian folklore, and works of fantasy literature such as J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. There is also a popular type of "troll doll" with brightly-coloured hair. In internet culture a "troll" is a term used to refer to someone who engages in gratuitous arguments or causes trouble for the sake of causing trouble.

Unicode 10.0 (June 2017) introduced a number of emoji or fantasy beings, namely Mage, Fairy, Vampire, Merperson, Elf, Genie, and Zombie. As part of ballot comments on ISO/IEC 10646 5<sup>th</sup> edition Amendment 1, the national bodies of Ireland and UK requested that a Troll emoji also be added to the standard in order to fill an obvious gap in the proposed set of emoji for fantasy beings. Despite the undeniable importance of the troll in both fantasy and internet culture, the request to add a Troll emoji was not accepted. We are therefore submitting this document as further evidence in support of adding a Troll emoji.

Due to the widespread appeal of the troll as a fantasy being, and in particular due to the ubiquitous use of troll terminology on the internet ("troll", "internet troll", "trolling", "troll farm", "don't feed the troll"), we anticipate that there will be a very high usage level of the Troll emoji by internet users.





.The Trolls.

*The Trolls* by J. R. R. Tolkien

## Selection Factors — Inclusion

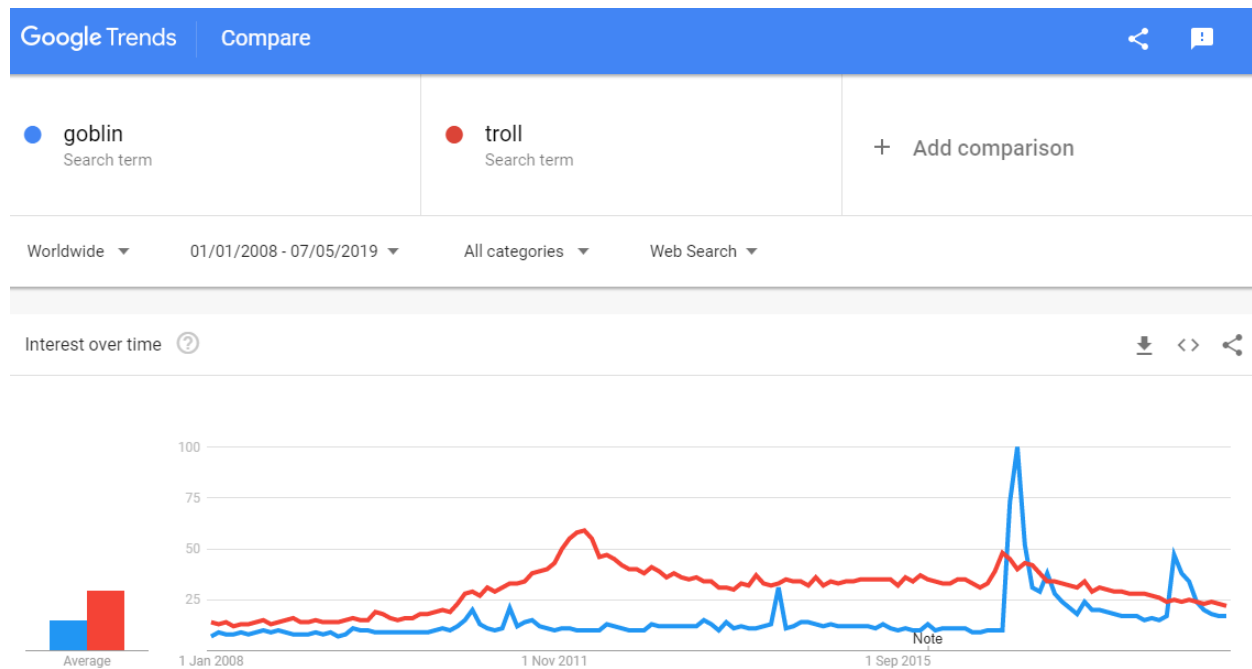
### A. Compatibility

Not applicable.

### B. Expected usage level

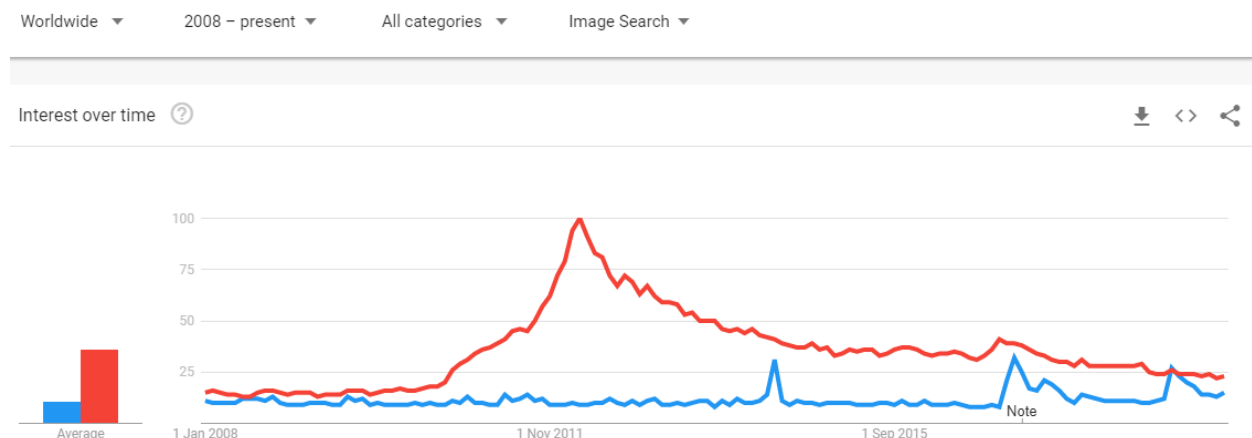
#### 1) Frequency

Google Trends shows that “troll” (red) is consistently higher than “goblin” (blue) for web searches, image searches, news searches, Google Shopping, and YouTube searches over the last ten years.



NB The large blue spike in January 2017 corresponds to the series finale of the South Korean television drama *Guardian: The Lonely and Great God* (쓸쓸하고 찬란하神 - 도깨비), also known as *Goblin*.

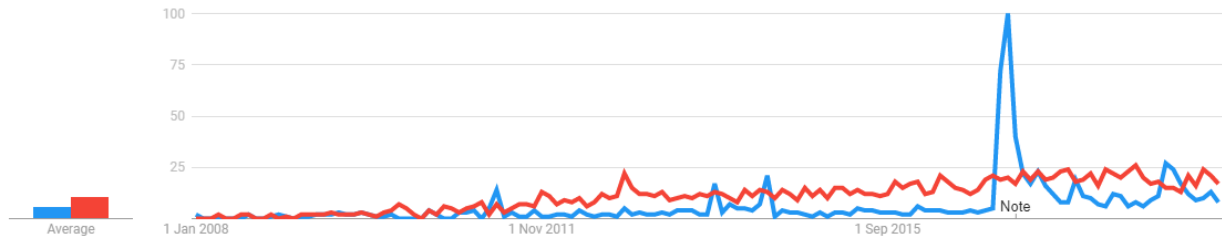
### Google Trends: Image Search



## Google Trends: News Search

Worldwide ▾ 2008 – present ▾ All categories ▾ News Search ▾

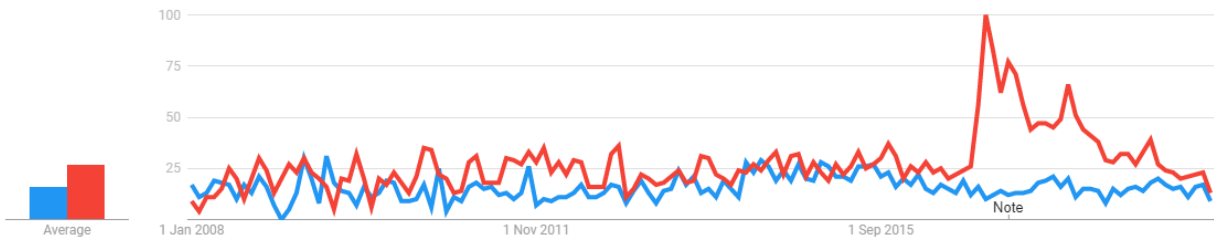
Interest over time ?



## Google Trends: Google Shopping

Worldwide ▾ 2008 – present ▾ All categories ▾ Google Shopping ▾

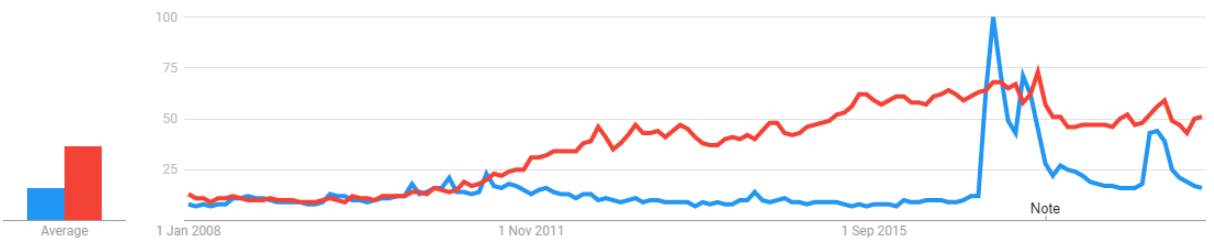
Interest over time ?



## Google Trends: YouTube Search

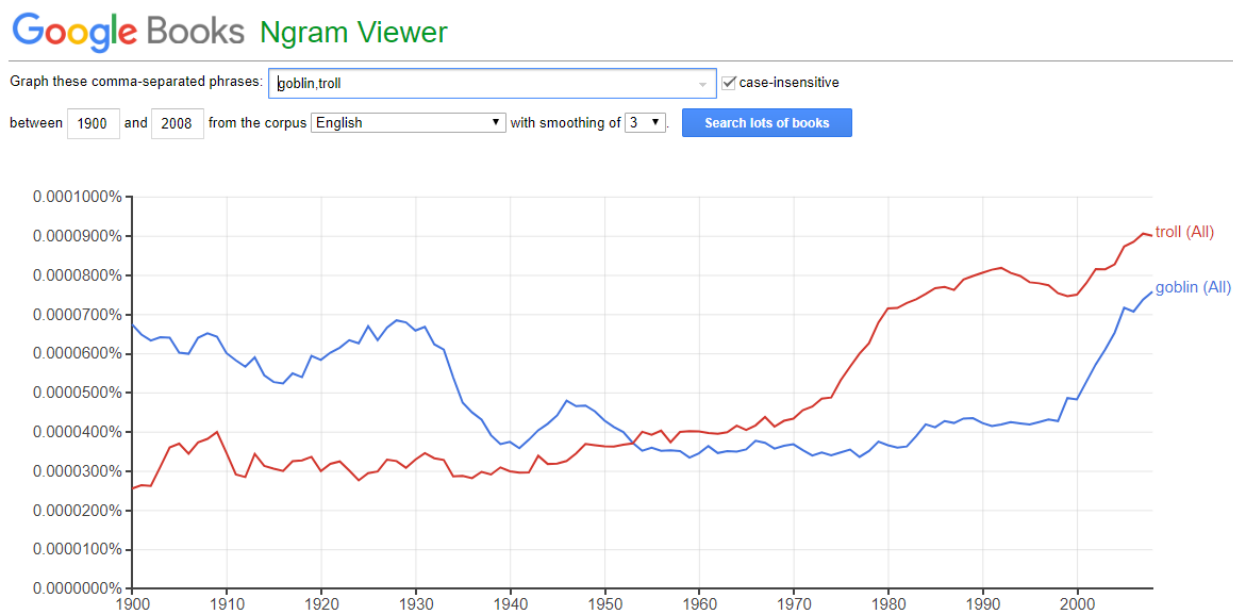
Worldwide ▾ 2008 – present ▾ All categories ▾ YouTube Search ▾

Interest over time ?



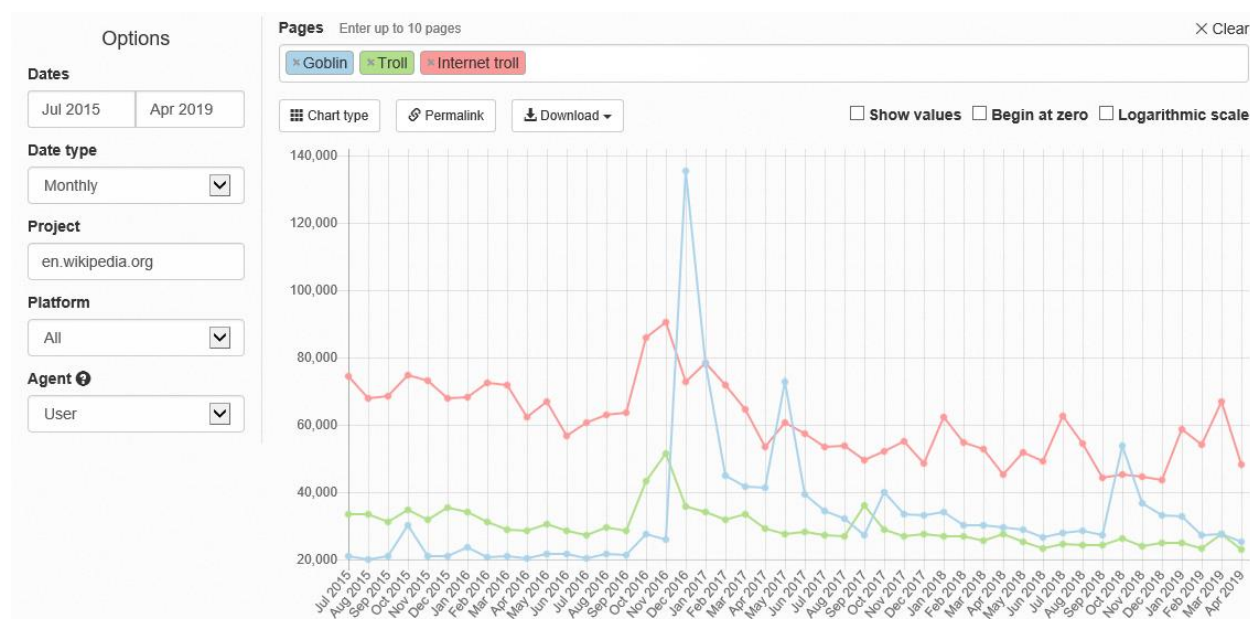
The Google Ngram chart below shows that the word “troll” had a lower frequency than the word “goblin” in printed books during the first half of the twentieth century, but “troll” has had a significantly higher frequency of occurrence compared with “goblin” every year since 1954 (perhaps not coincidentally, 1954 was the year of first publication of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, which includes both goblins [called orcs] and trolls).

## Google Books Ngram Results



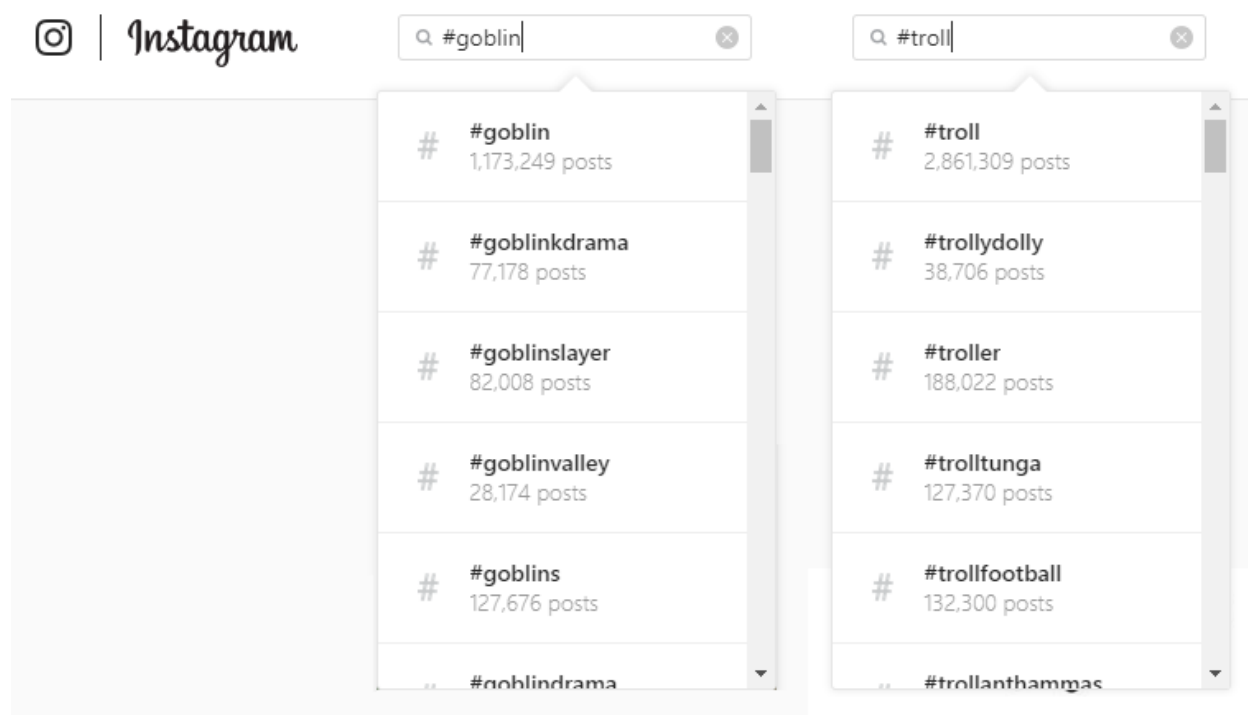
The above chart indicates how much has been written about goblins and trolls, but we can gauge the relative popularity of goblins and trolls for readers by looking at Wikipedia page statistics for the articles on “Goblin”, “Troll”, and “Internet troll”, which indicate that the Goblin and Troll pages have similar readership levels, but the Internet troll page has a much high readership level then either the Goblin or Troll pages.

## Wikipedia Page View Statistics



On Instagram, posts tagged with #troll outrank posts tagged with #goblin by more than one million.

### Instagram Tags



#### 2) Multiple usages

Troll is used both literally to refer to the mythological or fantasy being, and to refer to a person who engages in quarrelsome or unpleasant behaviour on the internet.

#### 3) Use in sequences

The expression “No trolls!” could be represented as TROLL + COMBINING ENCLOSING CIRCLE BACKSLASH.

The expression “Don’t feed the troll” could be represented as TROLL + POULTRY LEG + COMBINING ENCLOSING CIRCLE BACKSLASH. In the internet image on the right this expression is depicted as someone handing a roast chicken to a troll, enclosed in a prohibition sign.

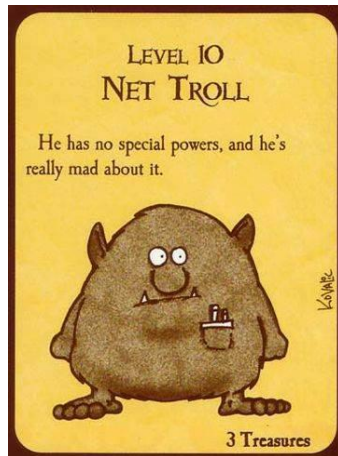


#### 4) Breaking new ground

Not applicable.

### *C. Image distinctiveness*

Trolls have historically not been represented with a single, consistent image, but they are generally depicted as large, ungainly bipedal creatures with an ugly, misshapen face, often with green skin and two upward-pointing tusks. As a character representing a fantasy being, the most appropriate glyph for a troll is certainly one that reflects these features. It is likely to be used as well as a metaphor for internet trolls. There is one particular “trollface” internet meme image which has some currency, but it does not reflect the mythological character, and is unlikely to be implementable at emoji sizes anyway. And it’s unpleasant.



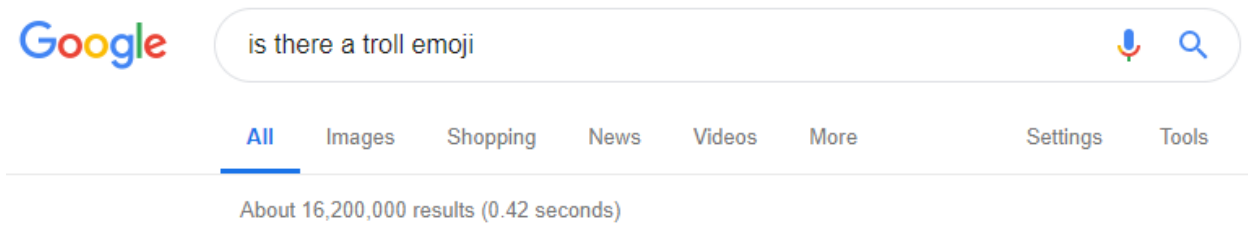
### *D. Completeness*

The troll fills a gap in emoji for fantasy beings.

### *E. Frequently requested*

Yes.

The phrase “Is there a troll emoji?” receives over 16 million results on Google search.



The lack of a troll emoji is also mentioned by users on Twitter on a daily basis. We could easily list hundreds of tweets bemoaning the lack of a Troll emoji, but the sample of five tweets over two or three days shown below suffices to give some idea of the frustration felt by Twitter users.



## Selection factors — Exclusion



### *F. Overly specific*


No. Troll is not a subclass of any existing emoji.


### *G. Open-ended*

No.

### *H. Already representable*

It is sometimes suggested that either of two existing emoji, U+1F479 Japanese Ogre  or U+1F47A Japanese Goblin , could be used to represent the troll. However, these two emoji are peculiarly Japanese, and cannot be adapted to represent either the troll of Northern European folklore or the concept of an internet troll.

According to Emojipedia, the Japanese Goblin is “A menacing, red mask featuring a grotesquely long nose, angry eyes, and bushy eyebrows and mustache. Depicts a *tengu*, a proud trickster figure in Japanese folklore.” This is clearly a very specific Japanese monster with characteristic traits such as long nose and red skin that are not applicable to the troll. 

According to Emojipedia, the Japanese Ogre is “A grotesque, red face with horns, wide eyes, a large nose, crooked fangs, and a fringe of shaggy hair. Depicts an *oni*, a kind of hideous ogre in Japanese folklore.” This is also a very specific Japanese monster with characteristic traits such as horns and red skin that are not applicable to the troll. 

### *I. Logos, brands, UI icons, signage, specific people, deities*

There are commercial troll dolls, but there are no concerns regarding intellectual property, copyright or trademark restrictions regarding the word “troll” or generic troll images.

### *J. Transient*

No. Trolls have been known to humans for hundreds or thousands of years, and will almost certainly survive the demise of the human race.

### *K. Faulty comparison*

No.

### *L. Exact Images*

No.

## Other information

None.